



# *Conservation on Louisiana's Private Lands*

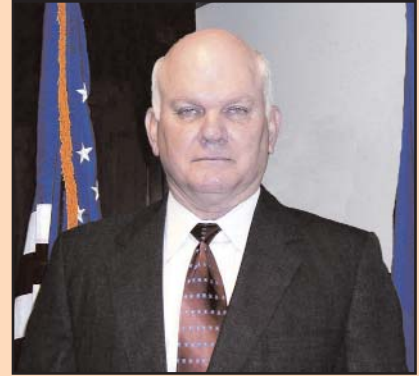


**A report by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation  
Service in cooperation with Louisiana's 44 Soil and Water  
Conservation Districts and Louisiana's Resource  
Conservation and Development Councils**

## ***From the State Conservationist:***

***Hurricanes, historic events, and new conservation programs were the focus of conservation work during calendar year 2005.***

***Louisiana residents will long remember 2005 as the year that the state was hit by two major hurricanes causing massive damage along its coastal zone. Some have referred to the damage as the worst natural disaster to hit the United States in history.***



***After Hurricane Katrina in late August and Hurricane Rita in September, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel began helping local units of government by conducting damage surveys of the areas and assisting those units of government with repair work through the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program.***

***Prior to the hurricanes, in May 2005, the conservation partnership in Louisiana celebrated 200,000 acres enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program. Also, we had the first Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program initiated in Louisiana through the USDA Farm Service Agency. In addition, NRCS administered the Conservation Security Program for the first time ever in Louisiana in the southwest part of the state--rewarding farmers and other landowners for good stewardship.***

***Stewardship of our environment, conservation of our natural resources, and service to Louisiana people are what we are about. Our programs are important; our cost-share dollars are vital, but without the voluntary commitment of our state's agricultural producers, the cooperation of our partners and agencies, and a dedicated NRCS workforce, nothing would get done.***

***The conservation team is strong in Louisiana and I stand in pride, reverence, and utmost respect for the conservationists of this state--private landowners, conservation organizations, and dedicated public servants.***

***Donald W. Gohmert  
State Conservationist***

### **On the Cover:**

***A bald cypress was planted on a tract of land owned by Elton Kennedy in Madison Parish as part of the 200,000-acre Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Ceremony and in celebration of American Wetlands Month. Shown (L-R) Ann Remides, NRCS volunteer; Charles A. "Buck" Vandersteen, Louisiana Forestry Association; Dr. Curtis Hopkins, Ducks Unlimited; Dr. Ken Roberts, LSU Ag Center; Horace Austin, NRCS State Conservationist (retired); Honorable Mark Rey, Under Secretary, USDA; Linda Blount, Representing Honorable Rodney Alexander, United States Representative; Jon Andrew, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Elton Kennedy, landowner and WRP participant; Parke Moore, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Don Gohmert, NRCS State Conservationist. Speakers at the 200,000-acre event included Jerome Ford, Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge; Commissioner of Agriculture Bob Odom; Jon Andrew; Parke Moore; Paul Davidson, Black Bear Conservation Committee; Keith Ouchley, The Nature Conservancy; and Mark Rey.***



# 200,000-acre Wetlands Reserve Program Ceremony--A Milestone for Louisiana



**In May 2005, the Louisiana partnership celebrated 200,000 acres enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). There are now over 210,000 acres of land enrolled in WRP.**

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their properties. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service manages WRP and provides technical and financial support to help landowners who participate in the program. WRP offers landowners three options:

- Permanent Easements
- 30-year Easements
- Restoration Cost-share Agreements

During 2005, NRCS offered to purchase easements on another 12,685 acres for 51 additional contracts.



## **Fact:**

***Of the 200,000 acres in the Wetlands Reserve Program in Louisiana, over 145,000 acres have been fully restored to trees, shallow water, and functioning wetlands.***

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program



**The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill. It is a voluntary USDA conservation program for farmers and ranchers to treat identified soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on eligible land. It provides technical and financial assistance to eligible agricultural producers.

Since 1996, thousands of Louisiana landowners have made an investment in conserving Louisiana's natural resources through **EQIP**.

## **Fact:**

*Since 1998, over 7,900 contracts have been funded and over \$41.3 million obligated.*

Congressional District	2005 Number of Contracts Funded	2005 Contract Acres	2005 Contract Amounts
1	186	12,208	\$871,730
2			
3	56	11,818	\$460,504
4	290	36,987	\$2,884,528
5	407	45,587	\$6,109,992
6	109	12,389	\$841,617
7	224	30,841	\$3,408,383
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,272</b>	<b>149,830</b>	<b>\$14,576,754</b>





# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

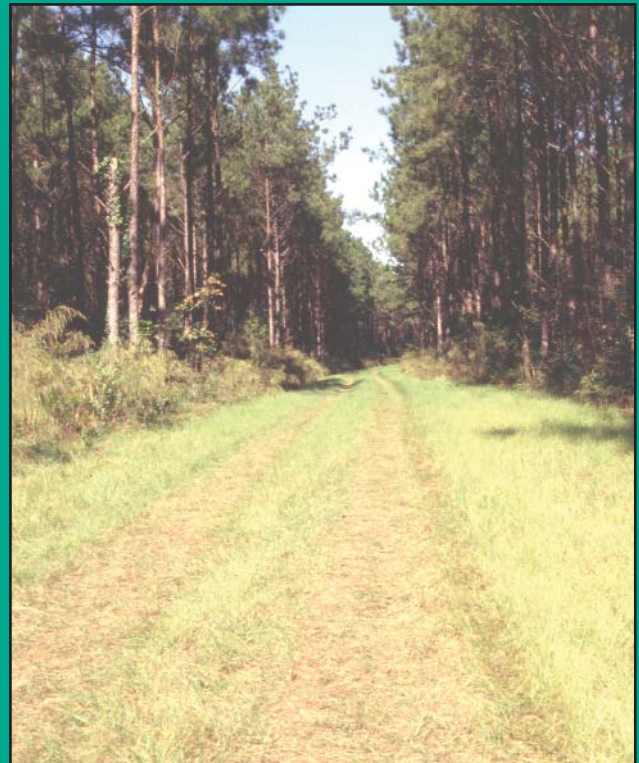


## The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

(WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on their private lands. WHIP provides both technical assistance and cost-share payments to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Practices installed under the WHIP include:

- *Dikes* to hold water for wildlife, especially migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.
- *Prescribed Burning* uses fire as a management tool to establish and maintain highly desirable food and cover plants for wildlife.
- *Tree Establishment* to help grow more trees for wildlife; longleaf pine ecosystems are a priority.
- *Structures for Water Control* to provide water during the most critical periods of the year. Water may be removed to promote the establishment and growth of food and cover plants.
- *Shallow Water Management for Wildlife* uses management tools such as disking to encourage the establishment and growth of important wildlife plants.
- *Brush Management* to remove invasive species of brush that have no wildlife benefits.



## Helping Wildlife Through WHIP. Since 1998:

- 431 WHIP agreements developed
- Agreements developed on 29,163 acres
- Agreements provided \$2,569,446 in cost-share assistance matched by approximately \$863,000 from landowner participants.



# Conservation Reserve Program

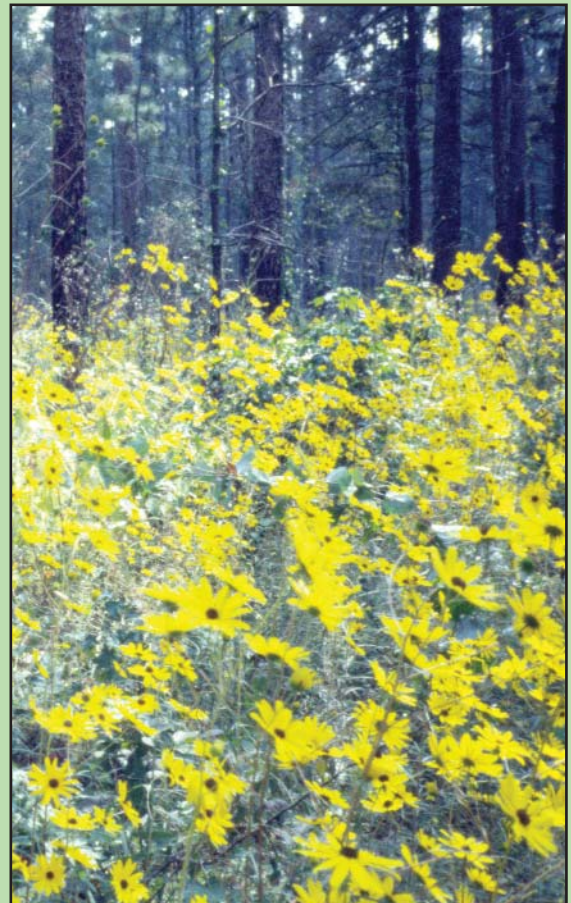
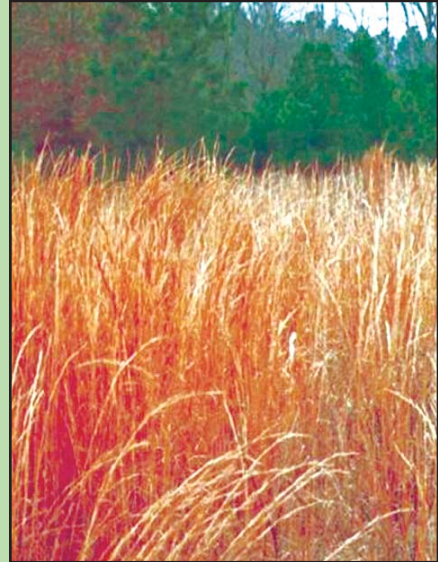
## CRP

**The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency. The program offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to farmers to establish long-term conserving covers like grass and trees on eligible land. Contracts are for a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 15 years.

**CRP** requires a balance among conservation purposes for soil erosion control, water quality protection, and wildlife habitat. **CRP** technical assistance is provided by NRCS.

**Through 31 CRP Sign-ups,  
Louisiana has:**

- **4,040 active CRP contracts.**
- **275,388 total CRP acres.**
- **Annual rental payments in excess of \$13 million!**



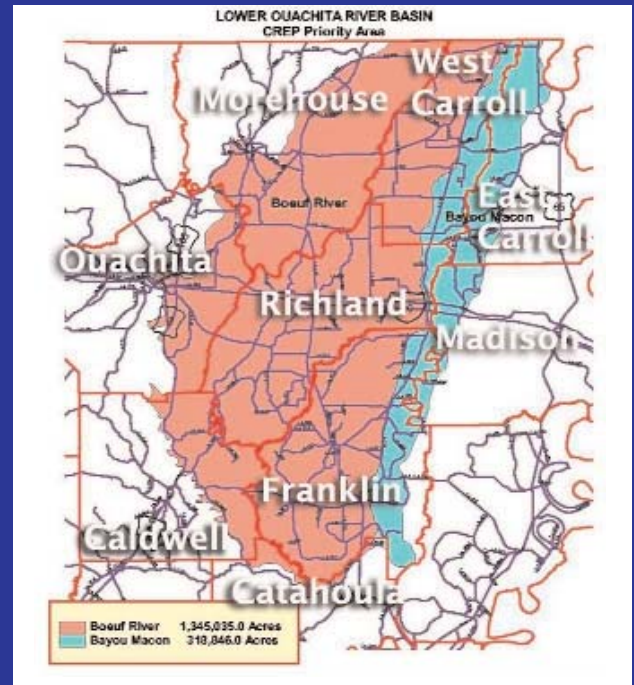


# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program



The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is an offspring of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency. CREP is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Unique state and federal partnerships allow landowners to receive incentive payments for installing specific conservation practices. Through CREP, farmers can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible land.

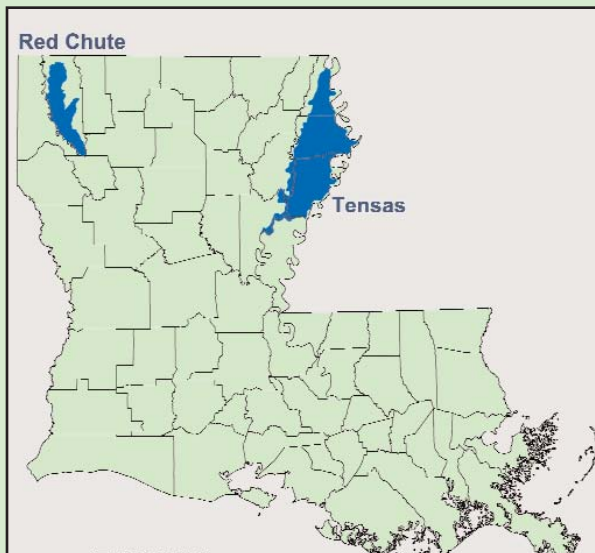
Since the implementation of the *Louisiana Lower Ouachita River Basin CREP* in April of 2004, the nine parishes in the program have accepted 467 offers including 34,258 acres.



CREP was officially implemented by the official signing of the agreement on April 22, 2005. (L-R) Don Anderson, Black Bear Conservation Committee; Don Gohmert, NRCS State Conservationist; Willie Cooper, FSA State Executive Director; Dennis Milligan, U.S. Business Council for Sustainable Development; Robbie Howard, Ducks Unlimited; (seated) Bob Odom, Commissioner of Agriculture; and James Little, FSA Administrator.

# Conservation Security Program

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and cattle producers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations in selected watersheds.



Red Chute and Tensas are the two watersheds selected for the 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) in Louisiana. The Red Chute watershed is located in the northwest part of the state, and the Tensas Watershed covers parts of northeast Louisiana.



*CSP sign-ups are only offered in selected priority watersheds across the nation.*

- *Producers must complete a self-assessment to determine eligibility*
- *Eligible producers within the watersheds submit an application for the program*
- *Based on the application, description of conservation activities and a follow-up interview, NRCS will determine which program tier and enrollment category are available for the applicant.*

*In 2005, there were 39 contracts covering 19,176 acres in CSP (Mermentau Headwaters and Vermilion Watersheds-southwest Louisiana). Total contract funding--\$2,458,676*







# Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Louisiana has 44 local soil and water conservation districts. Soil and water conservation districts are legal subdivisions of state government that coordinate and help administer natural resource conservation programs within their respective boundaries. Conservation districts help promote soil and water conservation work at the local level in every part of the state by being involved in conservation efforts and programs and helping to sponsor many projects. Soil and water conservation districts help promote conservation work within their boundaries.

One of the more innovative conservation district projects in recent years has been the “Fast Food Farm” in the New River Soil and Water Conservation District.



The *Fast Food Farm*, about 30 miles south of Baton Rouge, helps kids learn about food production. Personnel from the New River Soil and Water Conservation District and volunteers have been instrumental in developing this special learning area that helps kids connect to agriculture and the origin of their favorite fast foods. Hundreds of children learn about agriculture and conservation each year at the *Fast Food Farm*.

# *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA)*

In November 1990, Congress passed *Public Law 101-646, the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA)*. The Act provided a national mandate to help save Louisiana's coastal wetlands. The Act directed that a task force consisting of five federal agencies and the state of Louisiana develop a "comprehensive approach to restore and prevent the loss of coastal wetlands."

*Completed Breaux Act projects with NRCS as the federal sponsor and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources as the state sponsor:*

*Cheniere Au Tigre  
Jonathan Davis--Construction Unit 1,2,3  
Naomi Outfall  
Sweet Lake/Willow Lake  
Oaks-Avery  
Perry Ridge West  
West Hackberry Planting Demonstration  
Dewitt Rollover Planting Demonstration  
Falgout Canal Vegetation Demonstration  
Timbalier Island Vegetation Demonstration  
Boston Canal  
Highway 384  
Holly Beach  
Southwest Shore of White Lake Demonstration  
East Mud Lake  
Freshwater Bayou Wetlands  
Cameron Creole Maintenance  
Freshwater Bayou Bank Stabilization  
Raccoon Island Demonstration  
Perry Ridge/GIWW Bank Protection (Incre. 1)  
Brady Canal  
Thin-Mat Enhancement Demonstration  
Plowed Terraces Demonstration  
GIWW to Clovelly (revised)  
Barataria Bay Waterway/West  
Fritchie Marsh  
Barataria Bay Waterway/East  
Barataria Basin Landbridge--Const. Unit 1 & 2  
Cote Blanche Hydrologic Restoration  
Caernarvon Outfall Management  
Lake Portage  
Humble Canal  
Upper Oaks River  
Bayou L'Ours Ridge*

*NRCS has completed 30 CWPPRA projects; seven are currently being implemented or under construction; and eighteen are in planning and design. There are 54 total NRCS CWPPRA projects.*



Rock breakwaters installed through CWPPRA help protect Raccoon Island, one of the barrier islands in the Gulf of Mexico that helps protect Louisiana's coast.



# Civilian Conservation Corps Statue Dedicated



A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) statue was dedicated on March 31, 2005, at the I-49 Visitor's Center just north of Alexandria, Louisiana. The six foot tall bronze statue of a young CCC boy honors the millions of young men who worked from 1933 to 1942 planting billions of trees and completing public works projects. The statue was purchased through a cooperative effort of the Louisiana legislature, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and many associations, councils, and groups.

CCC was the idea of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and part of the "New Deal." It was an effort to revive the lagging economy by providing outdoor work for millions of young unemployed men. It also marked a renewed interest in the conservation of natural resources by providing needed assistance in restoring America's depleted natural resources.

Through the nine-year program, more than three million men enrolled for six months or longer at over 2,600 CCC camps.

# *The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative*

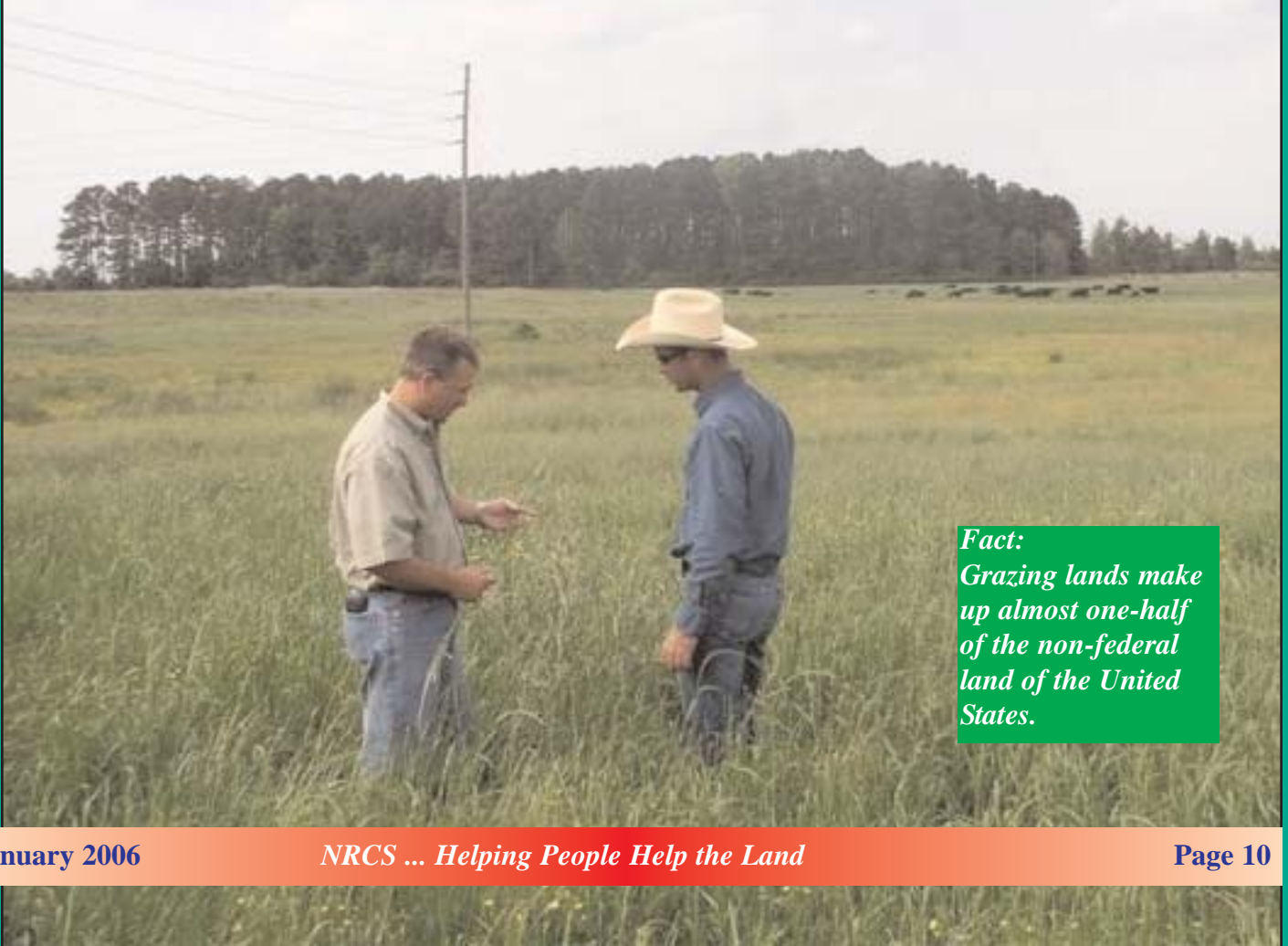


***The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is a voluntary effort to enhance private grazing lands through NRCS technical assistance. It is a nationwide partnership.***

**America's private grazing lands provide habitat to two-thirds of our wildlife, water for urban and other users, and visually appealing open space. Properly managed grazing lands provide food for grazing animals that convert it to food (meat and milk) for human consumption. Healthy grazing lands mean less erosion and cleaner water.**

**Louisiana Grazing Lands Specialists provided training to 2,595 people last year! Sixty-nine training and/or education/awareness activities such as grazing workshops, seminars, tours and field days were held throughout the state.**

**There are currently have twelve active Demonstration Projects on grazing lands. Thirty-two operating units are involved in the demonstration projects.**



***Fact:  
Grazing lands make up almost one-half of the non-federal land of the United States.***



# *The Emergency Watershed Protection Program-- Help After the Storms*

The Emergency Watershed Protection program (EWP) was set up by Congress to respond to emergencies created by natural disasters. Administered by the NRCS, it is designed to relieve imminent hazards to life and property after storms. All projects are sponsored by a political subdivision of the state. NRCS personnel completed "Damage Survey Reports" to document specific damages.



Most of the EWP work after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was debris removal and levee repair, but NRCS also worked with FEMA, soil and water conservation districts, and local units of government to help remove and dispose of large animal carcasses after the storms.

***Hurricane Katrina EWP Exigency (Emergency) Summary:*** Assistance requests for this hurricane came from 15 parishes, six municipalities, two drainage districts and four levee districts. NRCS personnel completed 99 damage survey reports related to Katrina with 69 contracts awarded to do the work (as of December 15, 2005)

***Hurricane Rita EWP Exigency (Emergency) Summary:*** Assistance requests for this hurricane came from eight parishes, four municipalities, 18 drainage districts and one levee district. NRCS personnel completed 58 damage survey reports related to Rita with 14 contracts awarded to do the work (as of December 15, 2005).



*Emergency repairs were made to the Montegut levee under the Emergency Watershed Protection program.*



NRCS personnel worked with the Vermilion and Gulf Coast Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Police Juries to remove and dispose of large livestock carcasses after the hurricanes. Over 300 animal carcasses were removed, buried or incinerated.

A watershed is the land that water flows over or under on its way to a bayou, lake, stream, river, gulf, or ocean.

NRCS administers watershed projects under Public Law 83-566, *the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954*. These projects help urban and rural communities protect, improve, and develop the water and land resources of watersheds up to 250,000 acres. Public Law 83-566 projects can be multipurpose.

**NRCS watershed projects provide:**

- **flood control**
- **irrigation water**
- **conservation benefits**
- **land treatment benefits**
- **added recreational benefits**



# *Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention*



**Louisiana has 86 outstanding long-term contracts for the watersheds of Central Richland, Bayou Bourbeux and Bayou Duralde-Lower Nezpique.**

**Louisiana NRCS is actively planning 12 watershed projects.**





# *Plant Materials Program*

**The NRCS Plant Materials Center located in Galliano, Louisiana:**

- Develops improved plants that will persist in changing coastal marsh environments.
- Develops cultural techniques for the successful use of improved plant materials.
- Releases and provides for the commercial production of improved plant materials.
- Develops and transfers effective plant science technology.
- Promotes the use of tested and proven plant materials.
- Serves as a statewide learning center.
- Cooperates with many partners including the LSU AgCenter.

**Many of today's environmental problems can be addressed effectively through the use of plants. The NRCS Plant Materials Program focuses on using native plants as a natural way to solve conservation problems and protect ecosystems.**

**A conservation partnership to enhance water fowl habitat on existing WRP sites is being developed between the Louisiana Clifton Choctaw Tribe and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS personnel at the Alexandria State Office and Galliano Plant Materials Center will assist the Clifton Choctaw Tribe in the producing local ecotype containerized buttonbush seedlings for WRP plantings.**

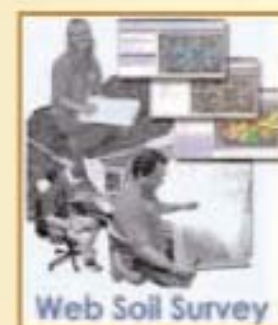
*(This photo background shows young buttonbush seedlings growing in a greenhouse)*



# Soil Survey and Soil Services

## Web Soil Survey Soils information just a mouse click away

Finally! Soil survey maps and data are just a mouse click away. After years of preparation of digital soil maps and a National Soil Information System, the Web Soil Survey site (<http://soils.usda.gov/survey>) went live on August 15, 2005.



The new website is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and will provide access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. The new system allows users to select their geographic area of interest similar to other web based "locator" sites but with specialized features for soils information. Features include enabling the viewer to display soil interpretations and suitabilities and accessing various soil property tables. All of this information can be downloaded to your local computer, or sent directly to your printer.

Soils sustain plant and animal life. Protecting and preserving the soil resource ensures a productive nation for future generations. Soil surveys provide the scientific information needed to properly manage and conserve soils. The Web Soil Survey provides land use planners quick and easy access to this valuable information.



Web Soil Survey - Soil Map



Web Soil Survey - Drainage Class



Web Soil Survey - Suitability for Dwellings

### Status of Soil Surveys as of December 1, 2005:

Acadia #, ++	East Baton Rouge #	Madison #	St. Landry #
Allen #	East Carroll	Morehouse	St. Martin #
Ascension #	East Feliciana #	Natchitoches	St. Mary #, ++
Assumption#	Evangeline #	Orleans #	St. Tammany
Avoyelles	Franklin	Ouachita	Tangipahoa #
Beauregard	Grant #	Plaquemines #	Tensas #, ++
Bienville	Iberia #	Pointe Coupee +	Terrebonne #, ++
Bossier #, +	Iberville #	Rapides #	Union
Caddo +	Jackson	Red River	Vermillion #
Calcasieu #	Jefferson #	Richland	Vernon
Caldwell	Jefferson Davis #	Sabine	Washington
Cameron	Lafayette #	St. Bernard #	Webster
Catahoula	Lafourche #	St. Charles #	West Baton Rouge #
Chaliborne	LaSalle #	St. Helena	West Carroll
Concordia	Lincoln #	St. James +	West Feliciana
Desoto	Livingston	St. John #, ++	Winn

Initial Soil Survey Complete - Publication Available - Hard Copy

Initial Soil Survey Complete - Publication Available - CD ROM

Initial Soil Survey Complete - Publication Available - HC & CD

Initial Soil Survey Complete - Publication Not Available

+ Update in progress - publication not available

( ) Update complete - publication not available

# Digital Soil Maps Available (<http://www.soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov>)

Note: When the digital soil maps become available on the Soil Data Mart (#), they supersede the soil maps in the published report as the official soil maps.



# *Resource Conservation and Development*

The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program, approved by Congress in 1962, is designed to speed up resource development and environmental protection in multi-parish and multi-county areas. RC&D areas are led by grassroots councils made up of community leaders and local officials that help provide practical solutions for land and resource conservation, environmental enhancement, water management and community development.

RC&D projects reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, create jobs and businesses, protect heritage sites and improve sewer treatment.

RC&D councils work with many partners to educate individuals and groups about natural resource issues and conservation needs.



A conservation partnership to enhance water fowl habitat on existing WRP sites is being developed between the Clifton Choctaw Tribe and the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Louisiana. Twin Valley RC&D is providing logistical guidance during the field planting operation with the Tribe.

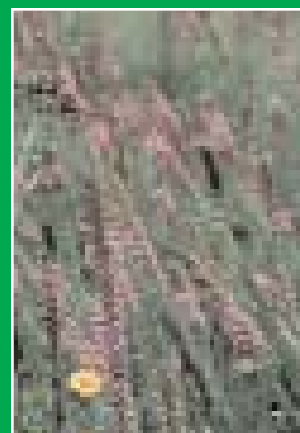
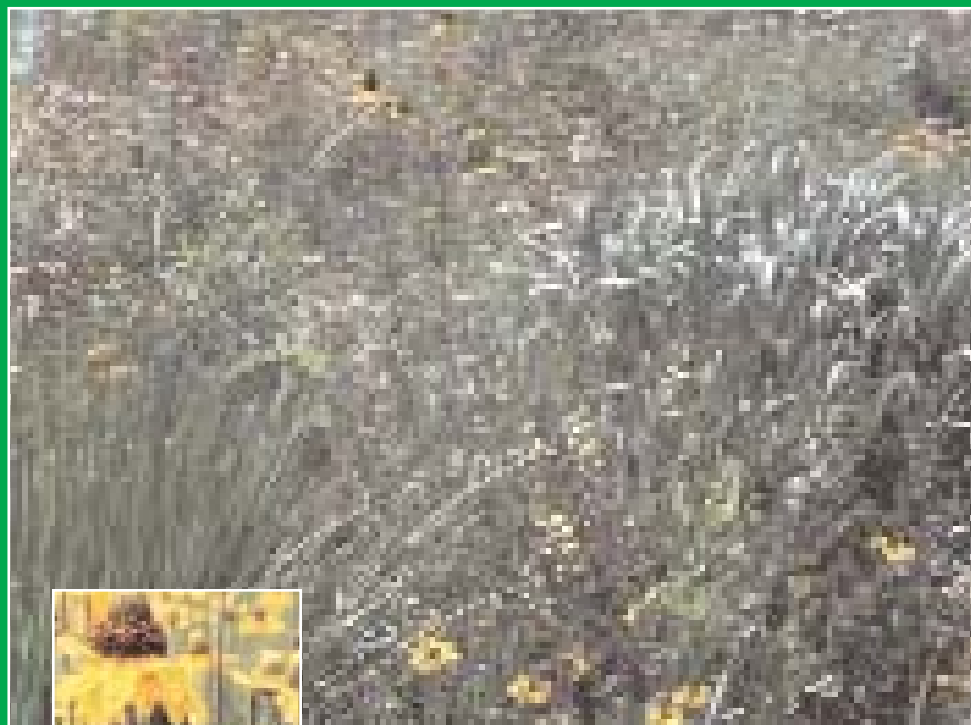
## *The Louisiana Native Plant Initiative (LNPI)*

The *Louisiana Native Plant Initiative (LNPI)* is a cooperative effort that will help to collect, preserve, increase, and study native grasses, forbs and legumes of Louisiana. *LNPI* will help conserve a vanishing natural resource.

Two integral parts to *LNPI* are seed collection and the increase and production of seed. Candidate species are selected by the *LNPI* Technical Committee based on resource concern, wildlife value, range of distribution and physical characteristics for commercial production. Local native seed are then collected from sources on private and public lands in the specific ecosystem as identified by the technical committee. Seeds are collected by hand or by mechanical means, and labeled based on location and other relevant scientific information. Using the year round grow out process, a local ecotype release will take 3 to 5 years from initial collection to release to the commercial market.

There is a growing interest from public and private sectors to utilize locally adapted native plant materials for restoration, conservation and revegetation projects.

A Memorandum of Understanding formalized a partnership to develop a comprehensive plant materials program to collect, increase and release locally adapted ecotypes of native grasses, forbs and legumes. The partners include McNeese State University, U.S. Geological Survey National Wetlands Research Center, Coastal Plain Conservancy, local soil and water conservation districts and NRCS. In two years, *LNPI* has 45 extensive collections from across the state, 15 species in initial evaluation, five breeder blocks and three species in seed increase.





# *The Earth Team*

The **Earth Team** is the volunteer segment or program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

*During the past year, 706 volunteers donated 33,849 hours of time in Louisiana!*

Earth Day celebrations involving **Earth Team** volunteers were held throughout Louisiana with hundreds of children and young adults participating in the partnership events.

## *Earth Day Fishing Tournament*



# NRCS Office Directory

Field Office	Telephone Number	Field Office	Telephone Number
Abbeville	(337) 893-5664 Ext. 3	Lake Providence	(318) 559-2604 Ext. 3
Addis	(225) 687-2184 Ext. 3	Leesville	(337) 239-2193 Ext. 3
Alexandria	(318) 473-7856 Ext. 3	Mansfield	(318) 872-4949 Ext. 3
Amite	(985) 748-8751 Ext. 3	Many	(318) 256-3491
Bastrop	(318) 283-7626 Ext. 3	Marksville	(318) 253-9445 Ext. 3
Benton	(318) 965-2185 Ext. 3	Minden	(318) 377-3950 Ext.3
Clinton	(225) 683-5496 Ext. 3	Monroe	(318) 343-4467 Ext. 3
Colfax	(318) 627-9903 Ext. 3	Natchitoches	(318) 357-8366 Ext. 3
Columbia	(318) 649-2651 Ext. 3	New Iberia	(337) 369-6623 Ext. 3
Coushatta	(318) 932-4352 Ext. 3	New Orleans	(985) 758-2162
Crowley	(337) 783-1257 Ext. 3	New Roads	(225) 638-7746 Ext. 3
Denham Springs	(225) 664-1430 Ext. 3	Oak Grove	(318) 428-9303 Ext. 3
DeRidder	(337) 463-8555 Ext. 3	Oberlin	(337) 639-4850 Ext. 3
Donaldsonville	(225) 473-7638 Ext. 3	Opelousas	(337) 942-2530 Ext. 3
Farmerville	(318) 368-8021	Rayville	(318)728-4451 Ext. 3
Ferriday	(318) 757-2455 Ext. 3	Ruston	(318) 255-3136 Ext. 3
Franklin	(337) 828-1461 Ext. 3	Shreveport	(318) 676 3333 Ext. 3
Franklinton	(985) 839-5688 Ext. 3	St. Joseph	(318)766-3502 Ext. 3
Jennings	(337) 824-0975 Ext. 3	Tallulah	(318) 574-4158 Ext. 3
Jonesville	(318) 339-4239 Ext. 3	Thibodaux	(985) 447-3871 Ext. 3
Lafayette	(337) 262-6601 Ext. 3	Ville Platte	(337) 363-6602 Ext. 3
Lake Charles	(337) 436-5020 Ext. 3	Winnsboro	(318) 435-6743 Ext. 3

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